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COMPUTER ROOM COMPLETE

Stop down and take a look at the new state-of-the-art MIS computer room. The much-needed room provided space for State Fund equipment that was previously tucked into a back room.

The new computer room was built with safety and convenience in mind. A raised floor distributes air-conditioning wherever it is needed; it provides a wire chase for all the electrical and computer wires; and it provides protection from minor flooding of the basement.

The fire protection system is now a "dry pipe" sprinkler system. A smoke detector alarm must go off before the pipes in the computer room fill with water. There are no water lines above the room which prevents accidental leaks on the equipment. There are smoke detectors in the ceiling and under the floor. Also, when a smoke detector is activated, the power to the computer room is disconnected. In the event of an electrical fire, the source is removed. The alarm system in the computer room detects high or low temperatures, power outages, water under the floor, and smoke in the computer room. If any of these conditions happen, the system calls a security company. The company then goes through a call list until someone is able to respond. The alarm system has 24 hour coverage.

Most of the lights and all of the equipment in the computer room are hooked to the emergency generator. This ensures adequate time and lighting for MIS to perform a controlled shutdown of equipment during a power outage.

A new 8-ton air-conditioner was installed in the room; the unit provides the additional capacity to cool the larger room, as well as the increased equipment. It also allows for more equipment in the future. The old air-conditioning unit has been moved to the next room as backup. New racks and desk systems were installed to organize the equipment.

Continued on page 4.

NEW E-MAIL POLICY

As with voice mail, it is important to let internal and external customers know when you are out of the office and unable to respond to e-mails. Outlook has a feature called the "Out of Office Assistant" that allows this. If you will be away from the office for one day or more, the State Fund policy is to use this Outlook feature for e-mails. Directions can be found in Outlook Help. Or, follow the steps below.

Out of Office Assistant Steps:

1. In the inbox window, click on tools.
2. Click "out of office assistant".
3. Click "I am currently out of the office".
4. Type the message you want to send while you are out in the "auto reply only once to each sender with the following text" box.
5. Click OK.

Make sure you update the Out of Office Assistant when you return to the office by going back in to the feature and clicking the "in the office" button.

Use of the Out of Office Assistant is officially part of the State Fund Communications Policy. Use this feature to provide the best possible customer service to both internal and external customers.

Published monthly by and for the employees of the Montana State Fund.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With little fanfare, the final legislature of the 20th Century came to a close last week. Now that it's over, it's time to step back and take a look at how the State Fund fared during this year's legislative session.

Overall, we're quite pleased with the outcome of the 1999 session. Two of our major bills were passed and have the potential to enhance the way we do business. The first of these bills, Senate Bill 68, does several things. It revises our surplus requirement, amends the current dividend statute, excludes the State Fund from the State's Procurement Act for insurance related services, and eliminates outdated statutory pricing programs. The second bill, Senate Bill 23, is a constitutional amendment to allow the Board of Investments to invest up to 25% of the State Fund's assets in private capital stock. This bill will now go to a vote of the people in November of 2000.

A third bill, Senate Bill 234, which would have allowed the State Fund to provide contract insurance services, was defeated in the House.

Bills that we opposed included House Bill 57, which allows the University System to go outside the State Fund to obtain its workers' comp insurance. Although this bill passed, we were able to attach a one year deferral which will give us additional time to achieve a more competitive business edge.

The State Fund was also opposed to bills which would have greatly increased benefit levels, a CI 75 "replacement" bill which could have made it difficult to raise premium levels if needed, and a bill that would have threatened one of our association group plans.

My thanks to all staff who worked so hard over the past four months to ensure a successful legislative outcome for the State Fund.

Remember the Book Fair on May 7!

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to Toni Sperle, Mail Document Processing Clerk, and the March Employee of the Month.

Toni's co-workers say she is always very pleasant and friendly when she picks up and delivers mail. Toni is also quick to help with large mailings, running letters through the folding machine, and any special mailing projects that come up.

Toni is a conscientious and hard worker. She makes sure the mail is picked up and delivered on time and that mail is delivered to the correct person. Toni is always happy to show new people where to deliver and pick up mail around State Fund.

A co-worker adds, "Even though you don't see much of the employees in the mail room, they are an extremely important part of State Fund. Toni always has a friendly hello and smile for everyone."

Thanks, Toni for you hard work and for spreading cheerfulness around State Fund!

KUDOS KOLUMN

Melissa Wilkinson, CFO of Advanced Integrated Management in Mesa, Arizona, recently wrote a letter to Vickie Shapiro and Karen Wegner. Melissa expressed her appreciation of their help. She states, "I know you both went above and beyond to help get certs out on behalf of Roberts Logging and F&K Logging.

John Royer, prior owner of Billings Great Harvest Bread Company called to cancel his policy when he sold his business. He told Mary Simpson, "State Fund rocks!" He also said we are the only agency he paid that his payment actually decreased.

The Administration & Finance Department thanks Jim Worthington, Fred Lubke, and Marvin Kraft for their tremendous efforts and professional results in contracting, purchasing, and building the new computer room.

Thanks to Myrna Hammond for all the help she gives the mailroom in finding numbers and other information. Debbie Knowles appreciates the fact that she is always considerate and pleasant. Thanks so much!

Mark Barry thanks Marvin, Fred, Jim and Dave of the Administration & Finance Department and Connie, Frank, Stacy, Lisa, Jonathan, and Ed of the MIS Department for their extra effort and hard work on the new computer room. The room looks great!

Kathleen from Anchor Alarms called to request a cert and commented on what a "great company the State Fund is" and how helpful and courteous the CSU staff is when she calls.

TYPING 101

By Morgan Hahn

At State Fund employee request, the Human Resource & Communications Department has purchased a typing tutorial for staff to borrow. The tutorial is available on cd-rom or 3.5 inch disk that you can load onto your computer. It's a great way to test your current typing ability, increase your typing speed and accuracy, and have fun at the same time!

This tutorial, as well as over 100 other books, videos, and cassette tapes are available to you on a checkout basis from the HR Resource Library. There's everything from an "Exercise Breaks" video to cassettes on "The Best of Lessons in Leadership: How to Stay Focused on the Customer," to "Winnie-the-Pooh on Problem Solving." You don't even need a Library Card to access them! Just come by the HR department and browse through the shelves of training materials located in Debbie Svaldi's office. (She will also point out the checkout and return list.) A current list of resources available is listed on the State Fund Intranet. If you don't find what you're looking for there, check out your *"Employee Training Opportunities at Montana State Fund"* guide (also on the Intranet). At the back of the guide is a list of videos available for loan through the State of Montana Professional Development Center (PDC). Please give Morgan a call (ext. 6520) to help you reserve a copy the PDC tapes.

CUSTOMER SERVICE TAPES OFFER GREAT ADVICE

By Karen Wegner

CSU recently viewed a series of tapes on quality customer service. The tapes provided valuable information on a variety of topics including the following areas.

Deliver Business Friendly Customer Service

- Have a smile in your voice
- Be genuine
- Be enthusiastic
- Offer more than the minimum
- Remember every call is unique
- Do not become desensitized
- Solve the problem
- Show sympathy
- Smile

Research shows that "satisfied customers tell 4 to 5 people" and "dissatisfied customers tell 9 to 12 people"

Continued on page 4.

TRAINING CALENDAR

PPRP Training for Employees—May 3; 8-11

PPRP Training for Supervisors—May 4; 8-11

Getting to Know Human Resources & Communications—May 5; 9-10

Violence in the Workplace—May 6; 9-10:30

Americans with Disabilities Act—May 11; 1-3

Getting to Know Underwriting, part 2—May 12; 9-10

Working with Difficult People—May 18; 1-4:30

Managing Your Time—May 27; 1-4:30

Sexual Harassment—June 1; 9-10:30

HUMAN RESOURCES

Personnel changes as of April 30, 1999

New Hires

Aprajita Puri (MIS)
Robin Peake (UW)

Departures

Ken Quattlebaum (Claim)
Wendy Lee (HR&C)

NEW EMPLOYEES

Welcome to **Aprajita Puri**, a new Software Developer in the MIS Department. Aprajita previously worked as a senior software training officer at Aprech in India. Her background includes a bachelors degree in mathematics, an MBA, and a masters degree in computer science. She enjoys traveling, sightseeing, natural beauty, and home decor

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Continued from page 1.

The controlled access system is part of the regular security system and allows only authorized staff into the room.

You might find it's not just the room that's fun to look at. The computer equipment inside the room is also impressive to see. Large windows allow staff and visitors to view the area and get a better idea of the equipment necessary to provide end-users with "information-at-your-fingertips" on a daily basis.

Editor: Chuck Christiansen
Managing Editor: Shannon Copps
Employee Reporters:
Kathy Rowsey Karen Wegner
Jay Phillips

Please call 444-6502 with comments or suggested articles.

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Customer Service Tapes, continued from page 3.

How to keep your attitude positive:
- Deal with negative people as little as possible
- Make your breaks work for you, not against you
- Practice positive talk
- Communicate positively

On average, 80% of internal work conversation is negative.

Understanding and Being Understood

Communication consists of:
- Voice
- Tone
- Visual Emotions
- Words
- Facial expressions
- Body Language
- Listening Perspective

Communication by phone consists of:
- Voice - Smile, they can hear it! Speak clearly - watch your speed - inflection - enunciation - volume.
- Tone - It's not what you say but how you say it! Make the caller feel welcome - don't interrupt.
- Words - Pronounce words clearly.
- Listening Perspective - Be careful how you say things. Watch filler words. Pay attention to the customer and not the job function.

Every customer wants to feel:
- Welcomed
- Important
- Valued
- Understood

Listening - By listening to the customer you show them respect, concern, and understanding.
- Decide to be a better listener
- Welcome the caller
- Concentrate
- Keep an open mind
- Give feedback that you are listening
- Take notes while you are listening
- Review the call back to the customer at the end - let them know you heard them and care about why they called

If you would like to view these tapes, please contact Andy Anderson at ext. 9372.